

Florin Japanese American Citizens League  
Oral History Project

Oral History Interview

with

**MISA KASHIWAGI**

February 10 & 16, 1994  
Sacramento, California

By Marion Kanemoto  
Florin Japanese American Citizens League  
and Oral History Program  
California State Univeristy, Sacramento





# JAPANESE AMERICAN CITIZENS LEAGUE

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## PREFACE

In the summer of 1987, a small group of people from the Florin JACL met at Mary and Al Tsukamoto's home to plan a new project for the organization. Because of the unique history of Florin, we felt that there were special stories that needed to be preserved. The town of Florin, California was once a thriving farming community with a large Japanese American population. The World War II internment of persons of Japanese ancestry living on the west coast, devastated the town and it never recovered. Today there is no town of Florin; it has been merged into the larger county of Sacramento. Many Japanese Americans who reside throughout the United States, however, have their origins from Florin, or have relatives and friends who once had ties to this community. The town may no longer exist, but the spirit of the community continues to survive in people's hearts and memories.

Several hours have been devoted to interviewing former Florin residents. The focus of the interviews was on the forced internment and life in the relocation camps, but our questions touched on other issues. We asked about their immigration to the United States from Japan, pre-war experiences, resettlement after the war and personal philosophies. We also wanted to record the stories of the people left behind. They were friends and neighbors who watched in anguish as the trains transported the community away.

We have conducted these interviews with feelings of urgency. If we are to come away with lessons from this historic tragedy, we must listen to and become acquainted with the people who were there. Many of these historians are in their 70's, 80's and 90's. We are grateful that they were willing to share their experiences and to answer our questions with openness and thoughtfulness.

We owe special thanks to James F. Carlson, former Assistant Dean of American River College and to Jackie Reinier, former Director of the Oral History Program at California State University in Sacramento. Without their enthusiasm, encouragement and expertise, we never could have produced this collection of oral histories. We also wish to acknowledge the project members, volunteers, the Florin JACL which contributed financial support, Sumitomo Bank for their corporate donation, and the Taisho Young Mens Association which contributed some of their assets as they dissolved their corporation on December 31, 1991.



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## INTERVIEW HISTORY

### INTERVIEWER

Marion Kanemoto, a retired school nurse and member of the Florin Japanese American Citizens League.

### INTERVIEW TIME AND PLACE

February 10 & 16, 1994  
Home of Mrs. Misa Kashiwagi  
34 Lanyard Court  
Sacramento, California 95831

### TRANSCRIBING AND EDITING

Transcribing was done by Sam Kashiwagi, her son. Laurie Kojima, a school teacher and member of the Florin Japanese American Citizens League did the wordprocessing and editing.

### PHOTOGRAPHY

Dan Inouye, a member of Florin JACL reproduced some of the family pictures. Other pictures were reproduced by color copy.

### TAPES AND INTERVIEW RECORDS

Copies of bound transcript and the tape will be held by Florin Japanese American Citizens League and in the University Archives at The Library, California State University, Sacramento, 6000 J Street, Sacramento, California 95819.



## BIOGRAPHICAL SUMMARY

Misa Ikeshita Kashiwagi is a 97 year old issei woman who was born in Wakayama-ken, Japan, on June 30, 1897. Her father preceded her mother by 6 years in coming to the Florin area. She was raised by her maternal grandparents. She had one older sister, Sumiye, and one younger brother, Yonekazu. She was called to the United States when she was 20 years old.

She attended school in Japan through the eighth grade and liked calligraphy. She also learned how to sew.

She married Yoshisuke on November 6, 1918, in Sacramento, California. He worked for her parents at times and was an issei 15 years older than she. He lived in a boarding house and worked on various farms before their marriage. Her parents returned to Japan three years after her marriage.

The Kashiwagis farmed the Stockton Boulevard and Florin area for 33 years prior to World War II. After the relocation camp experience, they bought a house in the "Taishoku" area near Jackson Road and Mayhew. Misa and Yoshisuke had five sons, William Yoshikazu, Paul Tadao, Masao, Isamu Sam, George Gungi, and one daughter, Natsuko.

Misa helped on the farm by cooking for the hired hands and packing grapes until 10:00 p.m. during harvest, besides taking care of the children and doing the family chores.

The Kashiwagis were baptized as were their children in their Methodist church. She did not have too many occasions to mingle with the outside community. Her occasional entertainment was the Japanese movies where the family donated one or two dollars for the admissions.

The Kashiwagis never received the money for the house they had sold before going to camp. They were sent to Arboga assembly center, then to Tule Lake and then to Minidoka. Misa remembers camp life was not productive. She washed dishes, and her husband was a janitor for \$16 a month.



Son Bill was drafted into the army before the WWII evacuation. Four other sons followed, being drafted during the internment period.

The Kashiwagis were active members of the Taisho Kai, a social club that started during the Taisho period (1912-1925). During the war, the club building was burned down. Later, Congress approved compensation, and the building was replaced with a smaller hall. The club had some seventy members, but with time, membership declined to some thirty members. In 1991 the organization was dissolved, and the Florin JACL was the recipient of \$10,000. It was stipulated that the fund be spent on the Japanese-American community. This oral history project is one of the benefactors as is the Japanese cemetery on Elder Creek Road. This cemetery dates back to 1867 and was redeveloped in 1992-1993.

Misa's husband, Yoshisuke, passed away in June 1962. In the 1980's Misa enjoyed the senior lunch program which her sons and daughters-in-law helped to start at the Sacramento Japanese Methodist church. The five Kashiwagi sons live in the Sacramento area, and all have been very active in various community work. Paul passed away in 1994. Misa is now 97 years old and claims she was too old to enjoy the redress compensation which she received in 1990. She enjoys her fourteen grandchildren and thirteen great-grandchildren. Her children are attentive to her needs, but she prides her independence. Currently she lives with son Masao.



[Begin Tape 1, Side 1]

KANEMOTO: This is the oral history of Mrs. Misa Kashiwagi, an Issei woman who is 97 years old, who lives at 34 Lanyard Court, South Sacramento, 95831. The day of interview is February 10, 1994. The interviewer is Marion Kanemoto for Florin JACL Oral History Project. This is tape one, side one. Also present are her sons, Masao, who is son number three and Sam, son number four.

Mrs. Kashiwagi, where were you born?

KASHIWAGI: I was born in Japan.

KANEMOTO: Wakayama-ken?

KASHIWAGI: Yes. Both of my parents were born in Japan. They came to the United States and settled near Elk Grove, California. They owned a 25 acre grape vineyard.

KANEMOTO: Were both of your parents in Elk Grove?

KASHIWAGI: Yes.

KANEMOTO: When did they come to America?

KASHIWAGI: I came to join them when I was twenty years old. After one year after my arrival, I became married and . . .



KANEMOTO: What year did you come to America?

KASHIWAGI: I have to look at my passport for the date.

KANEMOTO: You were twenty years old. When was your birthday?

KASHIWAGI: June 30.

KANEMOTO: June 30 of what year?

KASHIWAGI: 1898.

KANEMOTO: It was established that Mrs. Kashiwagi was born on June 30, 1898. Your parents called for you in 1917. Is that right?

KASHIWAGI: Yes. At that time, my parents owned twenty-five acres of vineyard. One year after arriving in Elk Grove, I married Mr. Kashiwagi. After our marriage, our first son, Bill was born. Three years after, my parents returned to Wakayama-ken, Japan. Bill was a year old at that time.

KANEMOTO: What was your father's name?

KASHIWAGI: Ikeshita, Yonekichi. My mother's name was Yasuotani Ikeshita.

KANEMOTO: Your father was one of the earliest settlers in Elk Grove among the Japanese.

KASHIWAGI: Soon thereafter, it was not possible for us Japanese to be sponsored for emigration to America. A lot of the brides came as picture brides.

KANEMOTO: You were left alone in Japan when your parents came to America. How old were you then?

KASHIWAGI: I was raised by my grandparents. My grandfather's name is



Otani, Shokichi.

KANEMOTO: Were the grandparents from your mother's side or father's side?

KASHIWAGI: They were my mother's parents.

KANEMOTO: Mrs. Kashiwagi had one older sister by the name of Sumiye. Misa was the middle child. The younger brother was Yonekazu. The father preceded the mother by six years. In the meantime, the children were left to be taken care by their grandparents. In twelve years later, after the father had been in Elk Grove [?] for six years, came to your father. When Misa was 20 years old, she was called to the United States. Mrs. Kashiwagi marriage through a [?] was the husband to be known?

KASHIWAGI: Marriage was through baishaku nin [a-go-between].

KANEMOTO: Before coming to America, was there a prearrangement for the marriage?

KASHIWAGI: No. I learned of the marriage after I arrived in America. I was not aware of the marriage while I was in Japan.

KANEMOTO: Mr. Kashiwagi was from which ken?

KASHIWAGI: From Wakayama, Japan. He came to America while he was a young man.

KANEMOTO: Your parents and Mr. Kashiwagi were both from Wakayama-ken. Is that right?

KASHIWAGI: Yes.



KANEMOTO: What was your thoughts at the time about Mr. Kashiwagi?

KASHIWAGI: Mr. Kashiwagi was working as a farm laborer. He worked for my parents on the vineyard and that was how my parents came to know Mr. Kashiwagi.

KANEMOTO: How old was Mr. Kashiwagi at the time of marriage?

KASHIWAGI: He was 15 years older than I was.

KANEMOTO: Fifteen years older, I see. He was an Issei man.

KASHIWAGI: Mr. Kashiwagi died at the age of seventy-nine.

KANEMOTO: That was quite a long life.

KASHIWAGI: He was one year away from becoming eighty years old. However, he became ill and passed on.

KANEMOTO: As a child in Japan, do you recall having enjoyable times at school?

KASHIWAGI: What?

KANEMOTO: Do you recall enjoyable incidents during your school days?

KASHIWAGI: I have forgotten and cannot recall any now.

KANEMOTO: Was it difficult for you after your mother left you to come to America? Were you lonely?

KASHIWAGI: After mother left for America I was lonely.

KANEMOTO: Up to what grade in school did you attend?

KASHIWAGI: To eighth grade.

KANEMOTO: What studies did you like?

KASHIWAGI: I liked calligraphy.

KANEMOTO: You must be good in letter writing.



KASHIWAGI: Not really.

KANEMOTO: Shuji is calligraphy. When you were headed for America, were you very happy? Unlike many picture brides since your home was also established you must have been very happy coming to America.

KASHIWAGI: Upon my arrival in San Francisco, my parents came to San Francisco and were staying at the inn. My father came after me at the Immigration office. My grandparents forewarned me to be very careful since I was a young girl and traveling alone. Although my father met me at the Immigration office, I was asked if he was my father. Since I hadn't seen him since I was a little girl, I couldn't answer the question at that moment. My father then told me to answer the Immigration officer's question. I said, "Yes, he is my father." After leaving the Immigration office, we headed for the inn, but I was not completely sure that he was my father. Upon arrival at the inn, my mother came running to greet me. I was never so happy.

KANEMOTO: Since you were separated from your father much longer than from your mother, it must have been reassuring that you were with the right parents. When you headed for America, you were 20 years old. Until then, what did you do in Japan?

KASHIWAGI: I went to school for eight years. After that, I learned sewing.

KANEMOTO: In Japan, it was customary for young girls to sew clothes.



KASHIWAGI: As of now, I can no longer do much of anything.

KANEMOTO: This was during 1917 when Misa came to America. [Another son, Sam, came to join in the interview.] About the time of your marriage to Mr. Kashiwagi, was he employed by your parents?

KASHIWAGI: Mr. Kashiwagi was working at various farms. During slack period, he stayed at a boarding house in Sacramento. When farmers needed workers, they came to the boarding house to hire workers. At that time, there were hardly any salary jobs.

KANEMOTO: At the time of your marriage to Mr. Kashiwagi, what was the rate of pay per day?

KASHIWAGI: About one dollar per day.

KANEMOTO: Were you happy to marry Mr. Kashiwagi?

KASHIWAGI: Yes.

KANEMOTO: What kind of person was Mr. Kashiwagi?

KASHIWAGI: He was a good man.

KANEMOTO: Was he a hard working man?

KASHIWAGI: Yes. Our son, Masao is very much like papa [Mr. Kashiwagi].

KANEMOTO: When you crossed the Pacific Ocean, how was the boat ride? Did you become seasick?

KASHIWAGI: No. I did not get seasick. I had planned on a first class passage, but there was no vacancy. Only second and third class passengers were available. I ate my meals in the second class dining room.



KANEMOTO: You remember well about the trip. It is very important that you do. Did you go to work on a a farm?

KASHIWAGI: I worked on our farm picking berries and grapes. I was not able to work elsewhere because of the children.

KANEMOTO: Where was your farm located?

KASHIWAGI: It was in Florin.

KANEMOTO: What street?

KASHIWAGI: The farm was located on Stockton Boulevard and Florin Road.

KANEMOTO: The area has changed since then.

KASHIWAGI: We farmed for 33 years on that property until we were evacuated. After leaving the relocation camp, we bought a house in Taishoku [Jackson Road area by Mayhew].

KANEMOTO: After coming to America, what do you think of life in America compared to life in Japan?

KASHIWAGI: What?

KANEMOTO: What do you think of the Florin area with lots of open land?

KASHIWAGI: America was much better than Japan.

KANEMOTO: What was better? Food?

KASHIWAGI: Food and clothing.

KANEMOTO: How about the household appliances and furnitures?

KASHIWAGI: In the old days, we hardly had any of those things.

KANEMOTO: After marriage, son Bill was born. Is that so?

KASHIWAGI: Yes.



KANEMOTO: After Bills birth, did you suffer any hardship?

KASHIWAGI: No. My parents helped me.

KANEMOTO: Who helped you in the childbirth? Midwife?

KASHIWAGI: Yes. Midwife.

KANEMOTO: Do you remember the name of the midwife?

KASHIWAGI: Kawamura-san of Florin.

KANEMOTO: When Bill was born, was Kawamura-san the midwife?

KASHIWAGI: Mayeda-san was the midwife when Bill was born.

Kawamura-san was the midwife when Paul was born. The rest of the children were also delivered by Kawamura-san.

KANEMOTO: As the children were born, did you suffer any hardship?

KASHIWAGI: No. I had an easy time at childbirth.

KANEMOTO: You are fortunate. Did your parents help you with the rest of the children?

KASHIWAGI: No. Just when Bill was born when he became three years old, my parents returned to Japan.

KANEMOTO: After your mother returned to Japan, who were your friends? People from Kenjin Kai?

KASHIWAGI: No. While the children were small, I did not attend Kenjin Kai or any other social events. I did not have the time to do so.

KANEMOTO: Did you work on the farm?

KASHIWAGI: Yes. I worked on the farm. While we had hired hands, I cooked for them.



KANEMOTO: What time did you start in the morning?

KASHIWAGI: I woke up about 6:00 a.m.

KANEMOTO: How about in the evening? Did your chores last until sunset?

KASHIWAGI: Usually until about 10:00 p.m. I did laundry by hand since we did not have a washing machine.

KANEMOTO: During the grape season, I understand you packed grapes in the evening until 10:00 p.m.

KASHIWAGI: Yes. After packing the grapes, I bathed the kids after that. I helped the children with the homework. I was always busy doing something.

KANEMOTO: Did you have any ties with the church?

KASHIWAGI: Yes. We had our children baptized with the Methodist Church.

KANEMOTO: You and your husband were both baptized?

KASHIWAGI: Yes. We were all baptized.

KANEMOTO: Did you have any Caucasian friends?

KASHIWAGI: Since I did not understand English, I did not have any Caucasian friends. Besides, I did not have the time for such leisure. At the time I came to America, there was a Caucasian neighbor who wanted to teach me English. They even bought an expensive lesson book. However, I was afraid of Caucasians and after about four lessons, I quit. People couldn't understand why I was so afraid of such a nice Caucasian couple.



[End Tape 1, Side 1]

[Begin Tape 1, Side 2]

KANEMOTO: Where was the English taught?

KASHIWAGI: At a neighbor's home.

KANEMOTO: What was her name?

KASHIWAGI: I cannot remember. It's been so long ago. My father and grandfather were both wine drinkers. The neighbor came to visit and drink together and were good friends. Had I learned English at that time, life would have been much easier. However, I was deathly afraid of Caucasians.

KANEMOTO: Were you ever intimidated by others?

KASHIWAGI: No. I did not have time to go anywhere where it could have happened.

KANEMOTO: After your mother returned to Japan, did you think of returning to Japan?

KASHIWAGI: I accompanied her to San Francisco when mother returned to Japan. I was very lonely and I cried after she boarded the ship.

KANEMOTO: Since you had Bill and a husband, you started a new family here. Besides helping with the ranch, did you do some other enjoyable things?

KASHIWAGI: I went to see a Japanese movie in Florin once a week.

KANEMOTO: Where was the movie shown?

KASHIWAGI: In Florin, at the Buddhist and Methodist churches.

KANEMOTO: How much was the admission?



KASHIWAGI: Admission was a donation of \$1.00 or \$2.00 for the family per showing.

KANEMOTO: It was a Japanese movie?

KASHIWAGI: Yes.

KANEMOTO: What years were that?

KASHIWAGI: Late 1920 and throughout 1930.

KANEMOTO: As for your children, Bill is the oldest. Who came after Bill?

KASHIWAGI: Paul, Masao, Sam, George and Natsuko.

KANEMOTO: What was George's Japanese name?

KASHIWAGI: Gunji.

KANEMOTO: What is Bill's first name?

KASHIWAGI: Yoshikazu.

KANEMOTO: Now your children use American names. Were they given American names at birth?

KASHIWAGI: No. They were given American names after they started school.

KANEMOTO: Does Natsuko have an English name?

KASHIWAGI: No.

KANEMOTO: Are you tired?

KASHIWAGI: No, but are we about finished?

KANEMOTO: No. We need to explore the period you were in camp. In Florin, your children attended special school. All the Japanese kids attended segregated grammar school. Did you think it was odd?



KASHIWAGI: I never gave it a thought since it affected all Japanese kids.

KANEMOTO: What's your opinion of this, Sam?

SAM: We did not know what civil rights were. We were very comfortable since we all ate rice balls and pickles.

KANEMOTO: At a child's level, that was your comfort. You ate Japanese food.

SAM: Even at this school, there was a division. There were the Buddhist kids and the Christian kids.

KANEMOTO: Even in the American school?

SAM: Yes.

KANEMOTO: How many kids were there in all total?

SAM: About fifty in the entire school. Most kids were taught several grades in one classroom. For a while, there was a portable for the first and second graders.

KANEMOTO: As a child, you were not aware of civil rights. You thought it was a natural thing. As an American Japanese kid you were divided by the church affiliations. Did you feel any other differences?

SAM: Some kids had physical defects and we were kids so we made fun of them.

KANEMOTO: Your teachers were all white?

SAM: Yes.

KANEMOTO: Did you feel you were accepted and taught like American kids?



- MASAO: Yes. They taught us that we were all Americans.
- KANEMOTO: You did not get rejects for teachers?
- MASAO: No. They really pounded that on us.
- KANEMOTO: Good. But still they segregated you. What period of time did this segregation happen?
- SAM: At one time, there was another building where the school exists now. Everybody attended that school. Then that building burned down so another school was built on the west side of the railroad tracks. All the white kids went there. Then the burned building was rebuilt and all the Japanese kids went to this school. According to George Miyao, this happened around 1917 or 1918 when segregation took place.
- KANEMOTO: That early? 1918. Then, until 1939. That wasn't for a short while, was it?
- SAM: A whole generation.
- KANEMOTO: A whole generation. Thank you. That's interesting. We don't have that statistics. Mrs. Kashiwagi, are you tired? Prior to war, was the farm operation successful?
- KASHIWAGI: It was profitable.
- KANEMOTO: Did you make a good profit before the war?
- KASHIWAGI: Yes.
- KANEMOTO: Did you employ your children?
- KASHIWAGI: Yes. Prior to the war, Paul worked in Sacramento for the State agency.



KANEMOTO: Did Natsuko also help on the farm?

MASAO: No. She was only three years old. Sam didn't work either.  
Only the three of us - Bill, Paul and I.

KANEMOTO: Sam didn't do it? When Pearl Harbor was attacked, what did you think then when you heard of it?

KASHIWAGI: I was scared.

KANEMOTO: How were you scared?

KASHIWAGI: Bill was in the Army. The war started two or three weeks after he enlisted. I was worried. I had sleepless nights.

KANEMOTO: Was he drafted?

KASHIWAGI: Yes.

KANEMOTO: At the time you entered camp, what were your thoughts?

KASHIWAGI: It was very trying.

KANEMOTO: What did you do with the furnishings?

KASHIWAGI: We packed everything in boxes and stored them at the Methodist Church. Paul attended meetings with the JACL and explained what can be brought to camp.

KANEMOTO: What did you call that church?

MASAO: Mikyokai. Methodist.

KANEMOTO: Paul was the one that brought back the message as to what can be taken to camp.

MASAO: He was the oldest since Bill was in the Army service.

KANEMOTO: What was it that she couldn't take? Food?

MASAO: Yes.



SAM: No fresh food. You can take staples.

KANEMOTO: Was Mr. Kashiwagi interrogated by the F.B.I.?

KASHIWAGI: No.

KANEMOTO: Was the prewar house your own?

KASHIWAGI: It was rented.

KANEMOTO: How much was the rent? Do you remember?

KASHIWAGI: I don't know.

SAM: Around \$900 per year. We had another ranch which we bought around 1941.

KANEMOTO: What happened to it? Did you lose it?

MASAO: We paid cash for it. We sold it for the price we bought it for. But he did not see a penny of it.

KANEMOTO: Oh my goodness. That's what we want to [?].

MASAO: We bought it for \$750 for the house and the 20 acre ranch.

SAM: It was a nice stucco house. It is still standing.

KANEMOTO: What important thing did you teach your children besides school work?

KASHIWAGI: Not to do any harm to other people. Listen well to teachers at school.

KANEMOTO: Not to bring shame to the family.

MASAO: Yes. That's it.

KANEMOTO: Did you send your children to Japanese language school?

KASHIWAGI: They went to Japanese school at the church.

KANEMOTO: Do you remember the teachers?



KASHIWAGI: Rev. Sasaki and Mrs. Sasaki.

KANEMOTO: Did you have an occasion to borrow money from somebody?  
Did you borrow from the bank?

KASHIWAGI: We never borrowed money.

SAM: We did. We bought a car on payment through GMAC.

KANEMOTO: In whose name?

SAM: In father's name. You could own personal property but not  
the real property.

KANEMOTO: GMAC.

KASHIWAGI: My husband was a straight-forward person. He loaned  
money, but he never borrowed to buy things.

KANEMOTO: Immediately prior to going to camp, what kind of leisure  
activity did they engage in? Baseball? Kendo?

KASHIWAGI: They played basketball.

KANEMOTO: Did you go see them play?

KASHIWAGI: No. I didn't have the time. I had to sew clothes for the  
children. I did not have time to visit my neighbors.

KANEMOTO: Who was your neighbor?

KASHIWAGI: Takemoto, Sekiguchi, Ishii, Miyao, Kushi.

KANEMOTO: With mostly boys in the family, was your life difficult?

KASHIWAGI: Yes, very much so. I had to do everything by hand, whether  
sewing or washing.

KANEMOTO: This is the second day, February 16 at the home of Mrs.  
Kashiwagi on Lanyard Court. When entering camp, where



did you go before going to Tule Lake?

KASHIWAGI: Marysville. We stayed there about two months, and then to Tule Lake for two years. Then to Idaho. I came out of camp from there.

KANEMOTO: How did you pack the baggage before going to camp?

KASHIWAGI: We lived at the Stockton Boulevard property for 33 years.

KANEMOTO: Those things which you could not take to camp were stored at the church?

KASHIWAGI: Some of the items were left with the neighbors.

KANEMOTO: What was the neighbor's name?

MASAO: They had a Greek name.

KANEMOTO: Upon returning, were those items gone?

KASHIWAGI: No.

SAM: While we were at Tule Lake the Greek fellow sent those items to us.

KANEMOTO: The grapes and strawberries were a total loss?

KASHIWAGI: Yes. It was in May when we went to camp. Everything was cultivated, ready for irrigation.

SAM: There was a rule or something that if you don't take care of your farm, you will be charged with espionage or whatever. So, we did everything that needed to be done. Then we turned over the crop to our good neighbor, the Greek fellow. He made a bundle that year on grapes and strawberries.

KANEMOTO: Did you receive a formal letter about maintaining the farm to



the very end?

MASAO: It was in the newspaper.

KANEMOTO: Whose idea was it?

MASAO: I don't know.

KANEMOTO: Local newspapers or from the fruit exchange?

MASAO: It appeared as a news item.

[End Tape 1, Side 2]

[Begin Tape 2, Side 1]

KANEMOTO: Since there were quite a number of children, you must have had lots of suitcases.

KASHIWAGI: We had lots of baggage.

KANEMOTO: There were five children, since Bill has already been drafted in the army.

KASHIWAGI: Bill was serving in the U.S. Army.

KANEMOTO: You went to Arboga for two months and then to Tule Lake. How was the new housing at Tule Lake?

KASHIWAGI: So so.

KANEMOTO: How did you manage? Since you had no more kitchen duties, was it nicer? This type of livelihood will eventually take its toll.

KASHIWAGI: I hated it. I worked at the mess hall washing dishes, after the youngest child became of school age.

KANEMOTO: Were you paid for washing dishes in the mess hall?

KASHIWAGI: Yes. Sixteen dollars per month. Nearly all jobs paid sixteen



dollars per month.

KANEMOTO: What type of work did your husband do?

KASHIWAGI: He was a janitor. He worked in the boiler room in the laundry facility.

KANEMOTO: Was he paid sixteen dollars too?

KASHIWAGI: Yes.

KANEMOTO: The children went to school?

KASHIWAGI: Yes.

KANEMOTO: Were your children well-behaved and stayed out of trouble?

KASHIWAGI: Yes. None of our children got into trouble.

KANEMOTO: Who was stricter with the children- - you or your husband?

KASHIWAGI: I can't remember.

KANEMOTO: Sounds like your husband was an easy-going man. When the war started, were you discriminated, abused by the Caucasian soldiers or others? Did you hear of any name calling?

KASHIWAGI: No. No one did any bad things to us.

KANEMOTO: Paul was attacked in Sacramento. Do you recall?

KASHIWAGI: Do you mean after the start of the war?

KANEMOTO: Do you remember other things about the life in camp? Such as trying times or happy times.

KASHIWAGI: There were no real trying times.

KANEMOTO: Since you had leisure time, did you do any enjoyable things?

KASHIWAGI: Our youngest child was afraid of the crowded conditions and



she spent most of the time crying. She was four years old at the time.

KANEMOTO: How did mother feel about the "Yes, Yes" and "No, No" questionnaire? You had five sons at the time. Did you feel that you did not want them to go to war?

KASHIWAGI: Bill was already in the army. Paul was drafted. Then Masao was drafted, followed by Sam. At one time, I had four sons in the military. However, Paul was discharged because of health problems.

KANEMOTO: Were you worried about the lives of your sons?

KASHIWAGI: Yes. I had many a sleepless nights. When I did not receive mail, I worried. When other people received telegrams, I again worried.

KANEMOTO: Did you hear about the fellows from Florin who were killed in action?

KASHIWAGI: Yes. I heard from others about the fellows getting killed in action. I worried about my own sons that they too may be killed.

KANEMOTO: Did your sons write letters to you in Japanese?

KASHIWAGI: Yes. While my sons were in the army, they wrote to me in Japanese.

KANEMOTO: Do you remember the senninbari that you have given to you sons?

KASHIWAGI: I forgot that I did.



KANEMOTO: It is interesting that the Nisei boys were provided with the senninbari. While you were in camp, did you hate the camp life?

KASHIWAGI: There was very little to like about camp life.

KANEMOTO: I understand. You helped at the mess hall while you were in camp.

KASHIWAGI: For a short while, I was a dishwasher.

KANEMOTO: While in camp, did any of you go out of the camp for employment? Who went out first? You transferred from Tule Lake to Minidoka in Idaho.

KASHIWAGI: Yes.

KANEMOTO: Was Minidoka better than Tule Lake?

KASHIWAGI: Yes. For my children, Minidoka was better. Every week, the children were given treats. The children looked forward for the treats.

KANEMOTO: What kind of treats were given?

KASHIWAGI: Cookies, fruits. They were given to children sixteen years and younger.

KANEMOTO: Was your stay in Idaho longer or shorter?

KASHIWAGI: We stayed in Idaho about one year and a half and at Tule Lake for about two years. We left camp a few months before the war ended. Paul was working in Marysville and his employer encouraged him to bring the family. My husband and George went to Marysville to see what the conditions



were. Since it seemed all right, about a month later, we all left the camp and resettled in Marysville. Since it was an orchard farm, my husband and George worked there.

KANEMOTO: Even though your family was a big farm operator, you now became employees. When you were farming before the war, you were your own boss. What did you think of the change?

KASHIWAGI: We stayed in Marysville for a year and a half. Then we bought a house in Sacramento on Jackson Road.

KANEMOTO: What year did you buy the Jackson Road property?

KASHIWAGI: 1947.

KANEMOTO: Whose name did you use to purchase the property?

KASHIWAGI: Masao, Bill, and Sam.

KANEMOTO: I notice that there were other Japanese who moved into that area. Did someone tell you about that area?

KASHIWAGI: Yes. Mr. Fred Wakita. He was our neighbor.

KANEMOTO: Was the Jackson Road area good for you?

KASHIWAGI: Yes.

KANEMOTO: What did you grow there?

KASHIWAGI: My husband and I raised strawberries. Others went elsewhere for work.

KANEMOTO: Did any of you attend school at that time?

KASHIWAGI: Sam was attending college.

KANEMOTO: You lived at home. Did you help on the farm?

SAM: Yes, on weekends.



KANEMOTO: Was it a back-breaking ordeal?

KASHIWAGI: I once fell and hurt my back. It was very painful for a long time.

KANEMOTO: From farming, did you have a backache?

KASHIWAGI: I had a backache from picking strawberries.

KANEMOTO: Did you have any hardship?

KASHIWAGI: No, not especially. Lately, my legs hurt. I fell in my bedroom and broke my hip bone. The surgeon replaced my hip bone with a metal one.

KANEMOTO: I like to talk a little about the Taisho Kai. Did you join Taisho Kai after you moved to the Jackson Road property?

KASHIWAGI: Yes.

KANEMOTO: You folks joined Taisho Kai, which originated during the Taisho period, after you moved to Jackson Road. What was the purpose of Taisho kai? Was it like Kenjin Kai?

SAM: Taisho Kai started around 1910 as a loosely formed group. They had picnics, movies, and bingo once each year. It was a social group. When a death occurred, the group took care of the funeral.

KANEMOTO: It was kind of like a Kenjin Kai. What kens are represented in this group?

SAM: Mainly Wakayama and Hiroshima. In 1930, Walter Tsukamoto informed Taisho Kai to incorporate. So a corporation called Taisho Young Men's Team was formed.



Being a legal entity, it could own land. As a corporation it bought that land on Fruitridge and Hedge Avenue. It built a hall there. During the war, someone torched it. Then there was compensation that Congress approved. We got about \$3000 or \$4000. This time, the hall was built of basaltite so it will not burn.

KANEMOTO: How much did it cost to build?

SAM: It cost about \$3000-\$4000 to rebuild. Before there was a big wooden hall which was much bigger than the new one. At the beginning around the early 60's and 70's, we had an annual picnic by Goethe Park. We had an annual bingo in February. We had a Japanese show in October.

[End Tape 2, Side 1]

[Begin Tape 2, Side 2]

KANEMOTO: So, your mother made bento [Japanese lunch box]. How about other people in the club?

SAM: It was a family affair and each family brought their own. At the picnic prizes were toilet paper, towels, etc. The Niseis got married and the grandchildren attended the picnic when they were ten or eleven years old. As they grew older, they did not want to go anymore. The Niseis were then getting too old to run races so they stopped picnics around 1970. Then some died, some moved away. Soon we were down to thirty members.



KANEMOTO: How many members did you have at its greatest number?

SAM: During the heyday, we had sixty to seventy. Soon we were down to one thing- - bingo in February. Even that became a chore so we decided to disband.

KANEMOTO: You folks sold out when?

SAM: Five years ago. Nat Obara and Mrs. Kodoya were about the only ones left. In 1990, we were renting the facility to the VFW. They wanted to buy it. We agreed to sell the property for \$65,000. After the payment of debts, we had about \$60,000 left. JACL was one of the recipients. It got about \$10,000.

KANEMOTO: Florin JACL was the recipient of the \$10,000 and used the proceeds for the Florin JACL Oral History Project.

SAM: Part of the money was used to renovate the cemetery on Elder Creek Road. That cemetery was created in 1867, about the time the Civil War ended.

KANEMOTO: So that took care of the first pioneers who died.

SAM: A lot of them died around 1905-1910. Then they stopped burying there. It was more or less abandoned. Shig Okimura had an uncle buried there and he did not think it was right. So he came to Florin JACL. Florin JACL said we have Taisho Kai money so do whatever that needs to be done. Of course, we asked people for donations. Half of the cost was covered by donations. The other half was covered by Florin JACL.

KANEMOTO: It was well-invested. It shows the pride of the people in your



group. It was a nice gesture.

SAM: We invited the media and they were there for the dedication on Memorial Day.

KANEMOTO: Let's discuss a little about Mr. Kashiwagi. Was he happy at the Jackson Road home?

KASHIWAGI: Yes.

KANEMOTO: How did Mr. Kashiwagi die?

KASHIWAGI: Cancer.

KANEMOTO: Did he suffer for a long time?

KASHIWAGI: He stayed at the hospital for 48 days.

KANEMOTO: Was it stomach cancer?

KASHIWAGI: Yes.

KANEMOTO: How old was he?

KASHIWAGI: Seventy-nine years old when he died. He wanted to live to be eighty.

KANEMOTO: He was much older than you. You had family support from your children.

KASHIWAGI: After he died, I became lonely. While he was in the hospital, our children took turns looking after him during the night.

KANEMOTO: That's very commendable. That's the reason why you will be treated with care. You are very lucky. When you received the \$20,000 redress, what was your thoughts?

KASHIWAGI: I didn't think much about it.

KANEMOTO: Did you think it was expected?



KASHIWAGI: Well, money does not mean much because of my age. I could not spend it anyway. I purchased an automobile.

KANEMOTO: Have you been to Japan?

KASHIWAGI: Yes. I went there twenty-seven years ago. I went with Bill and his family.

KANEMOTO: Did you have relatives there then?

KASHIWAGI: Yes. My older sister was there. My younger sister died much earlier. My older sister died a year and a half after I visited her. I met with her at the right time.

KANEMOTO: Do you want to go again?

KASHIWAGI: Masao was going there and I was to accompany him. However my legs started to hurt. Because of the leg pain, I decided not to go. If it were not for the leg pain, I would have gone once more.

KANEMOTO: Do your legs still hurt?

KASHIWAGI: My legs are shaky.

KANEMOTO: So she went to Japan just once, twenty-seven years ago. When did you break your hip bone?

KASHIWAGI: Two years ago [1992].

KANEMOTO: Since coming to America, your life was better than in Japan. Is that so?

KASHIWAGI: Yes.

KANEMOTO: Are you a citizen of the United States?

KASHIWAGI: No.



KANEMOTO: Your church affiliation is Christian Church. Were you baptized?

KASHIWAGI: Yes, after returning from the camp.

KANEMOTO: Your husband too?

KASHIWAGI: Our children were baptized as a child. I was baptized at the same time as my husband.

KANEMOTO: Do you have anything else to say?

KASHIWAGI: No.

KANEMOTO: Your children all give to the community; not necessarily money but a lot of time. I have met Bill, Sam and George. You have a very nice family.

KASHIWAGI: Our children have yet to feud among themselves. Their wives are all great people. I am very glad.

KANEMOTO: Thank you very much for this interview. I enjoyed it very much. This will be made into a book.

KASHIWAGI: Where would the book be placed?

KANEMOTO: At the university.

KASHIWAGI: Will the books be used by the students?

KANEMOTO: Yes. To understand how the Japanese lived in America, and that it was not necessary to be relocated to camps during the war.

KASHIWAGI: I enjoyed attending Tanoshimi Kai every Wednesday [Sacramento Senior Service luncheons].

KANEMOTO: How many grandchildren do you have?



KASHIWAGI: Fourteen.

KANEMOTO: Any great-grandchildren?

KASHIWAGI: Thirteen.



APPENDIX A

Passport of Misa Kashiwagi



ADMITTED MAY 1917  
SAN FRANCISCO, CAL.  
FROM  
BY  
*Quilong*  
U. S. IMMIGRATION OFFICER

15-21

**VOID**





(文譯)

任該 No. 106434

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TRANSLATION.

THE IMPERIAL JAPANESE GOVERNMENT  
PASSPORT.

Emigrant (Relative).

The undersigned, His Imperial Japanese Majesty's Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, requests all the Authorities concerned, both Civil and Military, to permit the bearer  
*Misa Kishita*  
a Japanese subject, proceeding to ..... to pass freely, and without hinderance, and in case of need to afford every possible aid and protection.

L.S.

SCOUNT

OTONG

19 17

DESCRIPTION.

Domicile *Wakayama-shi*

Family relation *Daughter of Yonekichi*

Age *7* years *10* months.

Stature *4* feet *7* inches.

Particular features *B. mark on both forefingers.*

Signature of the Bearer

TRANSLATION.

LE GOUVERNEMENT IMPÉRIAL DU JAPON.

No. 106434

PASSEPORT.

Le soussigné, Ministre des Affaires Etrangères de Sa Majesté l'Empereur du Japon, prie toutes les autorités civiles et militaires compétentes, de laisser passer librement et sans obstacle M. ...., sujet Japonais, allant ..... et de lui accorder, en cas de besoin, toute aide et protection possibles.

Le ..... 19 .....

L.S.

Domicile du porteur

Relation de famille

Âge de ..... ans et ..... mois.

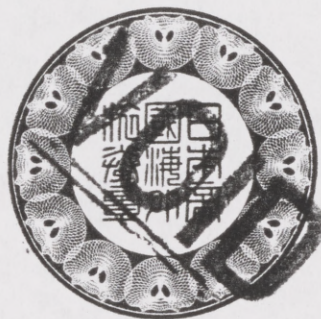
Taille ..... pieds ..... pouces.

Particularités physiques

Signature du porteur



第壹〇六四參四號



池下之井

族籍和歌山縣日高郡稻原村大字  
 關絳平氏戶主米吉二女  
 年齡十九年土々月  
 身長四尺九寸  
 特徵左右示指右中指乙蹄狀其他  
 指紋

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大正  
六年  
四月  
九日

日本帝國外務大臣

法學博士

英華書局

所持人自署

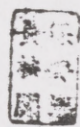
池下





和歌山縣指令保第二六五二號

渡航許可證



身長四尺九寸

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- 一 虎額部 傷痕 壹個
- 一 色白面丸 眉濃 眼大 九方

一指收

志高平指 指上 指下 指中 指末 花消火

和歌山縣日高郡稻原村大字山口九百貳拾壹番地

平民戸主宋吉貳女



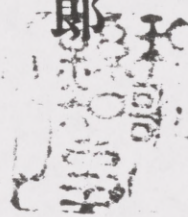
拾年六月拾拾日生

三 廿

右實父呼寄依り北來合衆國へ渡航ヲ許可ス

大正 六年 八月 拾六日

和歌山縣知事 鹿子木小五郎



身長 特徴 一指 一 二



APPENDIX B

Marriage Ceritificate of Yoshisuke and Misa Kashiwagi



riage

Marriage License  
and Certificate

Yoshiruki Kashiwagi  
AND

Mura Keshita

Filed for Record at Request of

J. J. O'Brien

this 6 day

of Nov. A. D., 1918

at 15 min. past 3

o'clock P.M., and Recorded in Book

No. 51 of Marriage Certificates, on

Page 136, Records of  
Sacramento County.

Garrett  
County Recorder

By Deputy Recorder

211-2-5



2332

## COUNTY OF SACRAMENTO

STATE OF CALIFORNIA



# Marriage License

These Presents are to Authorize

and license any Justice of the Supreme Court, Justice of the District Courts of Appeal, Judge of the Superior Court, Justice of the Peace, Judge of any Police Court, City Recorder, Priest, or Minister of the Gospel, of any denomination, to solemnize within said County the Marriage of Yoshisuki Kashiwagi native of Japan aged 36 years, resident of Sacramento County of Sacramento State of California and Misaa Ikeshita native of Japan aged 21 years, resident of Sacramento County of Sacramento State of California. Color Japane. Said parties being of sufficient age to be capable of contracting Marriage.

In Witness Whereof I have hereunto set my hand and affixed the Seal of the Superior Court of said County, this 6th day of November A.D. 1918

County Clerk and ex-officio Clerk of the Superior Court in and for said Sacramento County

Gregory Clerk By J. Simpson Deputy Clerk.

STATE OF CALIFORNIA, COUNTY OF SACRAMENTO, S.S. I hereby certify, that I believe the facts stated in the within and above License to be true, and that upon due inquiry there appears to be no legal impediment to the Marriage of said Yoshisuki Kashiwagi and Misaa Ikeshita that said parties were joined in Marriage by me on the 6th day of November 1918 in Sacramento said County and State, that M. Takasugi a resident of Sacramento County of Sacramento State of California and \_\_\_\_\_ a resident of \_\_\_\_\_ County of \_\_\_\_\_ State of \_\_\_\_\_ was not present as witnesses of said ceremony. I have hereunto set my hand this 6th day of November A.D. 1918



Thos. J. O'Brien

Justice of the Peace



APPENDIX C

GIFT TO FLORIN JAPANESE CITIZENS LEAGUE  
FROM TAISHO YOUNG MEN'S ASSOCIATION



12-30 1991 0202

11-35  
1210Pay to the  
Order of Florin Chapter Japanese American Citizens League \$ 10,623.54Ten thousand six hundred twenty three & 54/100 Dollars

Bank of America

Perkins Branch 0884  
P.O. Box 26045  
Sacramento, CA 95826Sam Kashiwagi  
Nat Ohara

For \_\_\_\_\_

⑆ 121000358⑆ 0202 ⑈ 0884 2⑈ 04440⑈

PORTSMOUTH

Japanese American Citizens League  
Florin Chapter  
P O Box 292634  
Sacramento, CA 95829

Attn: Board Members and Officers

Taisho Young Mens Association Inc. (Taisho Kai) was incorporated on January 23, 1930, under the laws of California as a nonprofit corporation. Prior to incorporation, it operated as an informal group since 1912 for social and mutual support purposes for nikkei residing around Fruitridge Road and Hedge Avenue area of Sacramento.

With the passage of time Taisho Kai ceased to be a viable organization because of members' deaths and or relocation to other areas. In 1991 the surviving members decided to dissolve the corporation and distribute its assets to other nikkei related organizations of their choices.

Your organization was designated by the following Taisho Kai members to receive their proportionate share of Taisho Kai's assets.

Sam Sakai 7751 Verna Mae Way Sacramento, CA 95828  
Yaeko Sakai 7751 Verna Mae Way, Sacramento, CA 95828  
Sam Kashiwagi (designated toward computer equipment)  
Betty Kashiwagi (designated toward computer equipment)  
Late Masatoshi Abe (designated toward scholarship)  
Late Fred K. Wakita  
Masuo Niki 331 South Kahiki St. Kahului HI 96732

Please accept the enclosed check for \$ 10,623.54 in behalf of the above-named Taisho Kai members.

Sincerely,

Nat Ohara

Nat Ohara, President

Sam Kashiwagi

Sam Kashiwagi, Secretary/Treasurer

ENC: